



**United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 1 - EPA New England
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Subject: Choquette Dairy – Inspection Report

From: Lisa Thuot (OEME)

Reviewed by: Andrew Spejewski (OES)

To: File

I. Facility Information

A. *Facility Name:* Choquette Dairy

B. *Facility Location:* 246 Choquette Road
Enosburg Falls, VT 05450

C. *Facility Contact(s):* Lisa Choquette, Owner
Andrew Choquette, Son of Owner
Adam Choquette, Son of Owner
(802) 933-5563

D. *NPDES ID Number:* None

II. Background Information

A. *Date and time of Inspection:*
Arrive at Facility: August 3, 2016 @ 0905
Exit Facility: August 3, 2016 @ 1145

B. *Weather Conditions:* Sunny, 85°F. No rain in the days prior to inspection.

C. *US EPA Representative(s):* Lisa Thuot, Compliance Inspector (OEME)

D. *State Representative(s):* Maria Steyaart, VT Agency of Agriculture
Trevor Lewis, VT Agency of Agriculture
Clark Parmelee, VT Agency of Agriculture

E. *Federally Enforceable Requirements Covered During Inspection:* 40 CFR §122.23

III. Type and Purpose of Inspection

The purpose of the inspection was to assess applicability of the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation requirements under the Clean Water Act at 40 C.F.R. Part 122.23. The inspection was requested by the EPA Office of Technical Enforcement.

IV. Inspection Information

Entry Procedures:

The inspection was announced in advance by telephone to Lisa Choquette on July 28, 2016. Upon arriving at the farm, I presented my inspector credentials to Lisa Choquette and her two sons, Andrew and Adam Choquette. Prior to walking around the farm, my boots were disinfected in accordance with EPA Biosecurity procedures.

Note: The information documented in this report is derived from statements by the Choquettes and from inspector observations.

Facility Background:

- Choquette Dairy (“the farm”) is owned by Lisa Choquette and is operated by she and her sons, Adam and Andrew Choquette. The farm has been owned by the Choquette family for 25 years.
- The farm has 280 mature milking and dry cows and about 160 heifers. The farm is covered by the VT Agency of Agriculture’s Medium Farm Operations (MFO) permit.
- There are approximately 305 tillable acres, including 30 rented acres, associated with the farm’s manure land application. Farm employees apply manure, which was done in late April and late June of 2016.
- The farm also has 120 acres of pasture land, and an on-site mortality compost pile.
- Cow feed consists of hay/grass stored in bales. Liquid whey is also provided to and consumed by the cows. The liquid whey is stored at the farm in a stationary tank truck.
- The nearest waterway is an unnamed stream located west of the farm production area, which flows south the Missiquoi River, approximately 0.3 miles south of the farm production area.

Facility Tour:

- Liquid whey is delivered to the farm by tanker truck and unloaded via a transfer pipeline into the farm’s on-site stationary tanker truck, which has a capacity of about 4,600 gallons (photo #1). During the inspection we observed a liquid whey delivery, and did not detect any leaks from the transfer pipeline.
- The whey tank has an overflow pipe which connects to the manure pit. Adam Choquette said the overflow pipe does not have a professional plumbing seal at the point where it leaves the tank truck (photo #2). Trevor Lewis determined the overflow pipe is pitched so only a small amount of liquid whey could enter and be diverted to the pit.
- The whey tank truck is situated in a location where runoff flows downhill to a small tributary to the unnamed stream noted above. Lisa Choquette said the tank truck location has been a concern due to its proximity to the stream. During the inspection, there was some residual white/gray deposition on the grassy slope below the tank truck and in the stream bed downgradient (photos #3-4). Trevor Lewis explained was not typical.

- Adam Choquette said a whey delivery driver had overfilled their farm's tank truck during a delivery, and that he reported the "reckless" driver who no longer works for the delivery company. Trevor Lewis suggested an improvement to the whey tank area, such as secondary containment and/or relocation of the tank truck.
- A spoiled feed pile was sitting on the edge of a silage bunker pad (photo #5). There is an adjacent storm drain pipe that flows into a grassy ditch/swale located behind a barn (photo #6). The ditch flows through a grass field, under Choquette Road, and into the unnamed stream located west of the farm. We recommended the Choquettes relocate the spoiled feed pile away from the drain pipe to prevent off-site migration.
- A shredded paper by-product from coffee filter manufacturing is used for cow bedding; residual paper was observed deposited in various locations on the farm.

Records Review:

- The farm has a nutrient management plan (NMP) prepared by Farm Compliance Services (FCS) of Lafayette, NY. Soil testing is done as required every 3 years. The VT Agency of Agriculture explained to the Choquettes that manure sampling must be done and documented annually.
- The NMP included rudimentary tally-style records of manure application. Maria Steyaart explained to the Choquettes that they need to document more detailed numeric manure application rates, in addition to tracking approximate crop yields. The farm's manure spreader holds about 4,600 gallons. The farm does not import or export any manure.

V. Exit Briefing

An exit briefing was conducted with Lisa Choquette, Adam Choquette, and Andrew Choquette. Maria Steyaart, Trevor Lewis, and Clark Parmelee of the VT Agency of Agriculture were also present. The following items were noted:

- Best management practices were recommended for the liquid whey tank, such as secondary containment or relocation to an area away from the stream.
- The spoiled feed pile should be moved to an area away from a storm drain pipe to prevent off-site migration of spoiled feed via the drainage ditch behind a barn.
- Maria Steyaart and Trevor Lewis explained cost-sharing programs through the state and NRCS for farm improvements.
- The Agency of Agriculture's MFO permit requires that certain records be maintained in the NMP, including manure application rates and crop yields.

End of Report

Report Attachments:

Inspection photos

Aerial photo map